

Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

National Guard troops flooding in as Washington locks down

By ASHRAF KHALIL and LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — All through downtown Washington, the primary sound for several blocks was the beeping of forklifts unloading more fencing.

There were no cars or scooters and seemingly no tourists Wednesday, just the occasional jogger and multiple construction crews at work. The U.S. Capitol, which proved such a soft target last week, was visible only through lines of tall, black fence.

Two blocks from the White House, a group of uniformed National Guard troops emerged from a tour bus and headed into a hotel as a state of lockdown descended on Washington that will last through the Jan. 20 inauguration. The number of National Guard troops coming to Washington to assist with security has so far grown to about 21,000, but could increase as law enforcement agencies review the ongoing threats, officials said Thursday. "Clearly we are in uncharted waters," said Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser.

Last week's "violent insurrection" at the Capitol by supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump has "impacted the way we are approaching working with our federal partners in planning for the 59th inauguration," Bowser said Wednesday.



Members of the National Guard walk past the Dome of the Capitol Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021.

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Associated Press



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2 appetizers



1 Main dish



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National Guard troops flooding in as Washington locks down

Continued from Front

The FBI has warned that armed protests by violent Trump supporters were being planned in all 50 state capitals as well as in Washington for the days leading up to the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. Between the pandemic and the security threat, Bowser is flat-out asking people not to come to the District of Columbia for the inauguration. And at Bowser's request, a National Special Security Event declaration was moved up to Jan. 13, a distinction she said "puts in place an entirely different command and control structure" for security.

The NSSE status is normal for a presidential inauguration and other major events like an international summit or the Super Bowl. But it's rare to start the lockdown so far in advance of the event. Police vehicles sealed off a huge swath of downtown D.C. on Wednesday, causing immediate traffic snarls. Starting Wednesday, Bowser said, anyone inside the inauguration perimeter might be stopped and questioned. Starting Friday, all parking garages in the downtown restricted zone will be sealed through the inauguration. Bowser is asking D.C. residents to avoid



Members of the National Guard walk past the Dome of the Capitol Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021.

the downtown area entirely, and the city announced that 13 Metro stations inside the security perimeter will shut down for several days. Bowser is also being pushed to deny lodging options to potentially violent protesters. The local Black Lives Matter affiliate and Shutdown DC issued a joint statement Wednesday urging all downtown hotels to voluntarily close and pay their staffs. In addition to the threat of violence, the activist groups say Trump supporters are a threat to the health of hotel staff for their general refus-

al to wear facemasks during the pandemic. Several downtown hotels, including one which had become a favorite hangout of the militant Proud Boy faction, chose to avoid trouble by closing last week.

"Closing hotels completely for these six nights is the only way to guarantee the safety of hotel workers, neighbors, vulnerable and unhoused residents, incoming administration officials, members of Congress, and our democracy," the statement said. "If hotels do not willingly close, we ask Mayor Bowser to extend today's

emergency order and close all hotels in the city." On Wednesday, Airbnb announced it was canceling all reservations in the Washington metro area. Bowser said she had been in regular contact with Airbnb officials since last week, but did not specifically request this step.

"We are aware of reports emerging yesterday afternoon regarding armed militias and known hate groups that are attempting to travel and disrupt the Inauguration," a company statement said. "We are continuing our work to en-

sure hate group members are not part of the Airbnb community."

On the ground, much of the most visible security will come in the form of the National Guard troops, some of them armed. Pentagon officials approved requests to have some of them carry either long guns or handguns, particularly those assigned near the Capitol building. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss security details. National Guard members operate under strict rules of engagement on the use of force. But generally speaking, troops can use lethal force to protect the lives of others and themselves.

D.C. Police Chief Robert Contee estimated Wednesday that more than 20,000 National Guard members would be active in the city on Inauguration Day. But officials said Thursday that law enforcement had requested many more, and the number approved by the Pentagon is now 21,000.

As of Thursday, there were roughly 7,000 already in the city, with thousands more en route. The length of their missions may vary, but Defense Department officials were authorized to deploy the Guard for up to 30 days for the inauguration and surrounding protests. □

Associated Press

Unclear who presides at Trump trial if he's out of office



In this Feb. 3, 2020 file image from video, presiding officer Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts speaks as closing arguments in the impeachment trial against President Donald Trump begin in the Senate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

Associated Press

By **MARK SHERMAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Constitution says the chief justice is to preside at the

impeachment trial of a president. But what about an ex-president?

Like so much else about the Constitution, the answer is

subject to interpretation. If President Donald Trump's trial begins after Jan. 20, it's not clear whether Chief Justice John Roberts would make his way to the Senate chamber as he did last year for Trump's first trial. Impeachment scholars, law professors and political scientists offer differing views.

The choices appear to be Roberts, Kamala Harris, who by then will be vice president, or Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who will be the Senate's president pro tem once the Democrats gain control of the Senate. One reason that the Constitution specifies the chief justice to run the president's

trial is that the person who otherwise presides over the Senate is the vice president — the very person who would assume the presidency if the chief executive is convicted. That's a bit unseemly. But if the stakes are changed and the sitting vice president no longer stands to get the top job, why not have Harris, who by then will have taken over for Mike Pence, preside?

Whittington said he thinks that could happen, "as with the impeachment of any officer other than the president." But he said he "can imagine that the Senate might go the other way

and treat a former president the same as a sitting president."

University of Texas law professor Steven Vladeck said the chief justice is the better choice. The House on Wednesday impeached the president, not the former president, Vladeck wrote on Twitter.

"Indeed, if Trump resigned (or his term ended) mid-trial, it would be more than a little odd for the Chief Justice to give way to the Vice President. The question should be whether the impeached officer was President at the time of impeachment. Here, he was, so Roberts presides," Vladeck wrote. □

Most major U.S. airlines ban guns in luggage for D.C. flights

By DAVID KOENIG
AP Airlines Writer

Airlines and airports say they are stepping up security before next week's presidential inauguration, with Delta and other major airlines saying they will prohibit passengers flying to the Washington area from putting guns in checked bags.

The moves follow the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump and politically tinged confrontations on some flights.

Delta Air Lines was the first to announce Thursday that it will prohibit checking guns to Washington-area airports and was soon followed by United, Alaska and American. All said their bans will start Saturday and run through Inauguration Day until Jan. 23.

"We are all on high alert based on the events over the last couple weeks up in Washington," CEO Ed Bastian said Thursday on CNBC.

The airlines also announced other measures. American Airlines is bringing back a ban on serving alcohol on flights to and from the Washington area — flights go dry starting Saturday through next Thursday. Several airlines are moving crews out of downtown Washington hotels for their safety.

Earlier this week, the Federal Aviation Administration announced it will raise en-



TSA officers wear protective masks at a security screening area at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Monday, May 18, 2020, in SeaTac, Wash.

Associated Press

forcement of rules against interfering with or assaulting airline crew members or other passengers. The FAA said that for the next two months it will stop giving warnings to violators and will instead refer their cases to law enforcement for potential charges, fines and jail terms.

FAA Administrator Stephen Dickson cited recent disturbances on planes, adding there has been "a trend after the breach of the Capitol last week."

Key lawmakers and the head of the nation's largest union of flight attendants have asked the FBI to place Capitol rioters on the federal no-fly list. An FBI offi-

cial said Tuesday that such a move was being considered. The FBI did not immediately respond Thursday to an update request.

So far, it has fallen on the nation's airlines to prevent an in-flight incident from getting out of control by threatening to ban people who refuse to wear masks or ignore flight attendants' orders.

Early last week, several Trump supporters on a Delta flight from Salt Lake City to Washington heckled Sen. Mitt Romney, a Utah Republican who has criticized Trump and voted last year to remove him from office. Bastian said the hecklers were identified with help

from airline employees and other passengers.

"There are six people, and they will never fly Delta again," Bastian told The Associated Press. "They have already been notified."

A few days later, another Republican senator, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, was harassed in the terminal at Reagan Washington National Airport after voting, in effect, to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory over Trump. Around the same time, Alaska Airlines said it banned 14 passengers who harassed crew members and refused to wear masks during a flight from the D.C. area to Seattle.

Bastian said Delta has "significantly increased our security both seen and unseen on board planes and in airports" leading up to the Biden inauguration next Wednesday.

American said it too is adding more security staff at Washington-area airports for inauguration week and will change its gate-area announcements to remind passengers to follow crew instructions and wear face masks, said spokesman Curtis Blessing.

The airline is also moving flight crews from downtown hotels to ones closer to the airports and hiring private transportation for them. Last week, passengers on an airport shuttle bus to Reagan airport made racial slurs against a Black flight attendant, according to the union representing American's flight attendants. Travelers going through Reagan National or Dulles International Airport outside Washington should expect to see more police presence through the inauguration, said Micah Lillard, a spokesman for the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. He declined to give details. Jeffrey Price, an aviation-security expert at Metropolitan State University in Denver, said the federal government needs to deploy more air marshals and other personnel on planes flying to and from the D.C. area. □

Unions: Passenger rails need better security, no-ride list

By JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Two major railroad workers unions have asked the Department of Homeland Security to beef up security on Amtrak and other passenger lines, including by creating a no-ride list akin to the no-fly list that prevents people identified as risks from boarding planes. The unions said Wednesday that tougher security measures are needed in light of last week's riot at the U.S.

Capitol because people who took part in the insurrection and were subsequently placed on the no-fly list may turn to rail travel instead. The Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers — Transportation Division and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen unions urged federal regulators to add more security at train stations to screen passengers before they board.

"Even as of this hour, the only real requirement for

a person to board a train is simply to have a ticket; nothing more, nothing less. There is no screening process. There is no TSA. And there are no significant statutes or regulations to penalize those willing to interfere with a train's crew or to do harm on a train, especially not when compared to the airline industry," the presidents of both unions, Jeremy Ferguson and Dennis Pierce, said in a joint statement, referring to the Transportation Security



In this Jan. 1, 2021 file photo, The Amtrak Metropolitan Lounge overlooks the newly-completed Moynihan Train Hall in New York.

Associated Press

Administration. Amtrak plans to deploy additional police officers on its trains and at stations to

help ensure compliance with safety rules, spokeswoman Kimberly Woods said. □

Watchdog: DOJ bungled 'zero tolerance' immigration policy

By COLLEEN LONG

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Justice Department leaders under President Donald Trump knew their 2018 "zero tolerance" border policy would result in family separations but pressed on with prosecutions even as other agencies became overwhelmed with migrants, a government watchdog report released Thursday has found.

The report from the inspector general for the Justice Department found that leadership failed to prepare to implement the policy or manage the fallout, which resulted in more than 3,000 family separations during "zero tolerance" and caused lasting emotional damage to children who were taken from their parents at the border. The policy was widely condemned by world leaders, religious groups and lawmakers in the U.S. as cruel. Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, along with other top leaders in the Trump administration, were bent on curbing immigration. The "zero tolerance" policy was one of several increasingly restrictive policies aimed at discouraging migrants from coming to the Southern border. Trump's administration also vastly reduced the number of refugees allowed into



In this Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2020, file photo, David Xol-Cholom, of Guatemala, hugs his son Byron at Los Angeles International Airport as they reunite after being separated during the Trump administration's wide-scale separation of immigrant families, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

the U.S. and all but halted asylum at the border, through a combination of executive orders and regulation changes.

President-elect Joe Biden has said Trump's restrictive immigration policies are harmful, but it's not clear yet what he will do when he gets in office to alter the system. About 5,500 children have been separated from their parents since Trump took office, and many of those parents were deported without their children.

Advocates for the families have called on Biden to allow those families to reunite in the United States.

The American Civil Liberties Union sued to stop the separations and a federal judge ordered the families to be reunited, but some are still not. Attorney Lee Gelernt, who has been working for years on the issue, said the practice was "immoral and illegal."

"At a minimum, Justice Department lawyers should have known the latter,"

Gelernt said. "This new report shows just how far the Trump administration was willing to go to destroy these families. Just when you think the Trump administration can't sink any lower, it does."

The "zero tolerance" policy meant that any adult caught crossing the border illegally would be prosecuted for illegal entry. Because children cannot be jailed with their family members, families were separated and children were taken

into custody by Health and Human Services, which manages unaccompanied children at the border. The policy was a colossal mess; there was no system created to reunite children with their families. The watchdog report found that it led to a \$227 million funding shortfall.

According to the report, department leaders underestimated how difficult it would be to carry out the policy in the field and did not inform local prosecutors and others that children would be separated. They also failed to understand that children would be separated longer than a few hours, and when that was discovered, they pressed on.

The policy began April 6, 2018, under an executive order that was issued without warning to other federal agencies that would have to manage the policy, including the U.S. Marshals Service and Health and Human Services. It was halted June 20, 2018.

The watchdog report found that judges, advocacy groups and even federal prosecutors raised concerns over the policy. But Sessions and others wrongly believed that arrests at the border would not result in prolonged separation and ignored the difficulty in reuniting families. □

Risky driving: U.S. traffic deaths up despite virus lockdowns



In this Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020, file photo, emergency crews work the scene of a fatal crash involving a charter bus and car on the AA highway in Campbell County, Ky.

Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — The number of people killed on the nation's highways rose 4.6% in the first nine months of 2020

despite coronavirus lockdowns that curtailed driving early in the year.

The National Highway Traf-

fic Safety Administration estimates that 28,190 people died in traffic crashes from January through September of last year, up from 26,941 in the same period of 2019. Final statistics for the full year won't come out until fall.

Authorities blamed the increase on risky driving behavior that developed when there were few vehicles on the road early in the pandemic.

"Preliminary data tells us that during the national health emergency, fewer Americans drove, but those who did took more risks and had more fatal crashes," the safety agency said in a

letter addressed to the nation's drivers.

Traffic deaths rose 0.6% during the first-quarter of 2020, but they fell 1.1% in the second quarter as coronavirus lockdowns restricted movement. Fatalities spiked 13.1% from July through September, the agency said.

"We think the big culprit is speeding," said Jonathan Adkins, executive director of the Governors Highway Safety Association. Early in the pandemic, drivers found open roads and drove faster. The behavior continued even as traffic volumes recovered, Adkins said. "A big factor here is

the lack of enforcement. We are hearing from many states that traffic stops have declined during COVID-19. Drivers feel like they can speed and get away with it," he said.

NHTSA said recent reports show a 22% increase in vehicle speeds in several metropolitan areas over pre-pandemic numbers. Also, a study found that 65% of drivers treated at trauma centers who were hurt in serious crashes had drugs or alcohol in their systems last year. It was 50.6% before the pandemic, NHTSA said. The agency also said fewer people are wearing seat belts. □

U.S. ambassador to U.N. and Taiwan's president meet virtually

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Her trip canceled in the final days of the Trump administration, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft instead met virtually Wednesday night with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and told her: "The United States will always stand with Taiwan."

And though she'll leave office with the president next week, Craft said she still hopes to visit the self-ruled island soon, calling Taiwan "a beacon and a lodestar" for its science, technology and democracy.

The announcement last week that Craft would visit Taiwan sparked sharp criticism from China's government, which considers Taiwan a renegade province and has stepped up threats to bring the island under its control.

China quickly condemned the virtual meeting, saying, "The United States should understand that the attempt to challenge



In this image made from a video screen shows Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, top, and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft meeting virtually on Wednesday night, Jan. 13, 2021. Associated Press

the one-China principle receives no support and is doomed to fail," in a statement from a spokesman for

China's Mission to the U.N. on Twitter.

American relations with Taiwan have warmed under President Donald Trump, largely due to strong bipartisan support in Congress, but also because the administration has been willing to defy Beijing's threats and promote Taiwan as an alternative to Chinese Communist Party authoritarianism.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had said Craft's trip would show "what a free China could achieve." But on Sunday, he canceled all senior-level overseas travels, including his own, to assist with the transition to President-elect Joe Biden's administration.

Tsai thanked Craft at the opening of the virtual meeting, which The Associated Press witnessed, "for the staunch support for Taiwan's international participation and for your efforts to deepening of the Taiwan-U.S. relationship and ... for always speaking up for Taiwan at the most impor-

tant times."

"The people of Taiwan have been inspired by your action," Tsai said. "Moving forward, we will keep pushing for our participation in the United Nations, and U.N. affiliated meetings and events, and I hope that the United States will continue to support our efforts."

Taiwan left the United Nations in 1971 when China joined, and Beijing has been using its diplomatic clout to stop Taiwan from joining any organizations that require statehood for membership.

Craft called Taiwan "an inspiration for the world," saying quite a number of U.N. member states — which she didn't name — "should look at Taiwan, not for opportunities to exclude it, but for reasons to aspire to it."

"In any context, by the standards of the free world, Taiwan is a model for democracy, equality for women, innovation and scientific exploration, a staunch defender of human rights," she said. □

U.K. fishers cry foul as Brexit red tape leaves catch rotting

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British fishing communities were among the strongest supporters of Brexit. But now some say they face ruin because of new red tape imposed by the U.K.'s departure from the European Union.

One seafood firm has

threatened to dump rotting crustaceans on the government's doorstep if the situation doesn't improve within days.

The government insisted Thursday that the issues were just "teething problems" that would soon be solved.

Many British fishermen backed Brexit because it

promised the chance for the U.K. to leave the EU's complex system of fishing quotas and regain control over who is allowed to fish in British waters.

Fishing rights became a major sticking point in the trade negotiations that followed the U.K.'s political departure from the bloc in January 2020, as European nations sought to retain access to waters where they have fished for decades or centuries.

Under a new U.K.-EU trade deal agreed last month, the EU's share of the catch in British seas will be cut by 25% over a 5 1/2-year transition period. After that, new quotas will have to be negotiated.

At the same time, Britain's exit from the EU single market means new costs and red tape for exporters — a major problem since Britain exports most of the fish its boats catch.

Danish company DFDS, which transports seafood

from Scotland to the EU by truck, has suspended shipments at least until Monday because of delays in getting new paperwork in order.

Jamie McMillan of Scotland's Lochfyne Langoustines said "the fishing industry has been made a fool of" by the government in London.

"We can't get our product to the EU market because of red tape," he said in a video released on social media.

"If Scottish exporters can't get their product to market next week, we will be at the gates of Westminster and we'll be dumping our shellfish on your doorstep, rotten," he added.

The trade deal that took effect Jan. 1 allows Britain and the EU to trade in goods without quotas or tariffs. But that is a far cry from the seamless, hassle-free trade the U.K. enjoyed while it was part of the EU's single market. Companies

face new expense and red tape, including customs declarations and border checks. There have been shortages of some goods on supermarket shelves as firms reduce the number and amount of shipments they make.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said fishing companies will be compensated for their losses, though he has not given details.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary George Eustice said the hiccups were "only teething problems. Once people get used to using the paperwork, goods will flow normally."

But many fishermen are unconvinced. Their anger grew after Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said Wednesday that she had not read all of the 1,200-page trade agreement when it was published on Christmas Eve, because she was busy "organizing the local Nativity trail." □



In this Monday, Nov. 11, 2019 file photo, fishermen arrange crabs after their boat returned from a fishing trip to the harbour in Hartlepool, England.

Associated Press

Sudanese protesters rally, demand detention centers closed

By **NOHA ELHENNAWY**
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Dozens of Sudanese rallied in the capital, Khartoum, on Thursday to demand the closure of illegal detention centers following the alleged torturing and killing of a man by a paramilitary force whose members once formed the backbone of a militia accused of war crimes in Darfur.

The death of Bahaa el-Din Nouri, snatched last month while sitting at a coffee shop last month, has reignited debate over the mandate of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces, which activists have long held responsible for several human rights violations.

Men and women held up Nouri's photographs, forming a human chain in downtown Khartoum from the office of Sudan's general prosecutor to the Cabinet. Many protesters also raised banners reading: "No to enforced disappearances."

The rally was called for by the Sudanese Professionals' Association, which spearheaded the popular uprising that led to the ouster of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.

Ammar al-Baqer, a member of the association, said the protest aims to reiterate his group's demands that "all illegal detention centers" be closed and that



A demonstrator gives the victory sign during a protest, in Khartoum, Sudan, Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020.

Associated Press

only the Sudanese police retain the right to detain people "according to due process."

Nouri was taken on Dec. 16 from the Kalakla neighborhood in southern Khartoum by men in plainclothes riding in a vehicle without license plates, his family has said. His body showed up five days later at a hospital morgue.

The family refused to take it for immediate burial after seeing signs of apparent beating and torture, according to Nouri's brother, Yasser.

Culture and Information Minister Faisal Mohamed Saleh, who is also the government spokesman, said an initial investigation showed Nouri died during interrogation by the Rapid Support Forces. The force's spokesman, Gen. Gamal

Goma, said the intelligence chief and officers involved in Nouri's detention and interrogation have been suspended or detained, pending an investigation into his death.

Public Prosecutor Taj al-Ser Ali al-Hebr said that the autopsy confirmed the 42-year-old electrician died of injuries consistent with being tortured.

"We, as lawyers, hope that people can stand together along with the police and the army against detentions and extra-judicial killings," said Ghada Abbas Ahmed, a lawyer who took part in the protest.

The Rapid Support Forces is largely comprised of former Janjaweed militiamen who have carried out a brutal crackdown in Sudan's Darfur region under al-Bashir. Rights groups have ac-

cused the Janjaweed of committing war crimes, including raping and killing civilians and burning down villages.

The force is led by powerful Sudanese Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who is also the deputy head of the ruling sovereign council. In response of Nouri's death, Dagalo said that he had removed immunity for all suspected force members to allow for an unhindered investigation.

Since al-Bashir's ouster, Dagalo has emerged as Sudan's main powerbroker, with his forces deployed in areas across the capital and other main cities. Sudan is currently led by a joint military-civilian government.

Thursday's protest comes against the backdrop of brewing tension between the military and civilian members of Sudan's transitional government. Tensions have largely centered on the Sudanese military's economic assets, over which the civilian-run finance ministry does not have control.

The government has been struggling with a huge budget deficit and widespread shortages of essential goods, including fuel, bread and medicines. Annual inflation has soared past 200% in the past months as prices of bread and other staples surged.

Separately, Lt. Gen. Shams el-Din Kabashi, a member of Sudan's ruling sovereign council met Thursday in Cairo with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi as both countries face strained relations with Ethiopia over its building of a controversial dam on the Blue Nile.

El-Sissi and Kabashi agreed to "continue their coordinated efforts" to resolve the dispute and also discussed the situation along the Sudanese-Ethiopian borders, which have recently witnessed sporadic military confrontations between the two neighboring countries.

In the past two months, Sudan's military has deployed troops to the border areas with Ethiopia and said it reclaimed territories for years controlled by Ethiopian militias and farmers. This development came on the heels of the eruption of a civil war in neighboring Ethiopia where government forces have been fighting local forces in the Tigray region since early November.

The conflict spilled over the border into Sudan last month. At least five Sudanese women and a child were killed in an attack Monday inside Sudan by Ethiopian militias, the Sudanese foreign ministry said.

The Tigray fighting has also sent over 60,000 Ethiopian refugees into Sudan, mostly into al-Qadarif. □

Hong Kong internet firm blocked website over security law



This photo shows the main page of HKChronicles website, seen in Yokohama, Japan, Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021.

Associated Press

By **ZEN SOO**
Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — A Hong Kong internet service

provider on Thursday said it had blocked access to a pro-democracy website to comply with the city's national security law.

In a statement emailed on Thursday, Hong Kong Broadband Network said that it had disabled access to HKChronicles, a website which compiled information on "yellow" shops that had supported the city's pro-democracy movement and released personal information and pictures of police and pro-Beijing supporters as part of a doxing effort during anti-government protests in 2019.

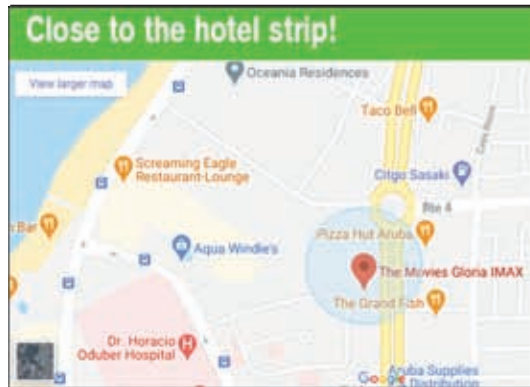
"We have disabled the access to the website in compliance with the requirement issued under the National Security Law. The action was taken on 13 Jan PM," the company said.

The chief editor of the site, Naomi Chan, said in a post last week that users in Hong Kong reported the site as inaccessible. Chan accused telecoms companies such as SmarTone, China Mobile Hong Kong, PCCW and Hong Kong Broadband Network of blocking the website.

China Mobile Hong Kong and SmarTone did not immediately comment. A

PCCW spokesman said it had no comment on the matter. Chan advised Hong Kongers to "make early preparations to counter future Internet blockage at a larger scale, and to face the darkness before dawn."

The move to block HKChronicles has intensified concerns that Beijing is asserting more control over the city and breaking its promise of letting the former British colony maintain separate civil rights and political systems for 50 years after the communist-ruled mainland took over in 1997. □



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Cuba tweaks socialist model to encourage work amid crisis

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — For more than 60 years, Cuba supplied at least some rice, milk, beans, sugar, chicken, electrical power and even cigarettes to its people nearly free of cost regardless of whether they worked, allowing many to survive without a job or depend solely on remittances. But this year, the government is implementing a deep financial reform that reduces subsidies, eliminates a dual currency that was key to the old system and raises salaries. It hopes to boost productivity to alleviate an economic crisis and reconfigure a socialist system that will still grant universal benefits such as free health care and education.

"It's a major shift in focus for a society that has lived and functioned one way for 62 years," said Cuban economist Ricardo Torres. "This sends a message: If you want to be in a fairly comfortable situation, then you have to get a job." The changes come as Cuba struggles with the



In this Dec. 23, 2020 file photo, people wearing ill-fitting masks used against the spread of the new coronavirus sit on a sidewalk next to a wall with political slogans in Havana, Cuba.

Associated Press

pandemic, an 11% drop in gross domestic product and the loss of what the government estimates is nearly \$5.6 billion as a result of economic sanctions imposed by outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump. Until Dec. 31, Cubans would pay 75 cents for a monthly basket filled with 19 basic products including meat,

coffee, eggs and soap. Now that will cost them \$7, according to Betsy Díaz Velázquez, minister of internal trade. Education and health services remain free, and the government will still subsidize milk for children up to age 7 and provide food to vulnerable groups, though some worry the reforms will

lead to problems. "It increases inequality without there being a concrete plan to reduce it," said Harold Cárdenas, a political analyst living in the U.S. who is part of a group that advocates a more democratic socialist Cuba. "It would be an exaggeration to say this is how the aspiration to social-

ism in Cuba ends, but this is definitely not how it is achieved."

But he said that encouraging people to work rather than discouraging it "will make the difference between success and failure for years to come."

About 7 million of the island's 11 million inhabitants are of working age, with some 2.7 million unemployed or not looking for a job. As a result, it hasn't been unusual to see young people playing dominoes on street corners, idly talking with friends for hours or leaving work early.

Authorities haven't immediately said where the idle will find productive jobs. They have promised a law by year's end that could encourage more private businesses, but haven't given details of what it might entail.

The most visible immediate change may be elimination of the "convertible peso," a dollar-linked currency aimed at drawing money from abroad that was necessary to buy many goods, often even essentials, hard to find in regular pesos. □

Honduran migrants trek north toward Guatemalan border

By MARÍA VERZA
Associated Press

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras (AP) — About 200 Honduran migrants resumed walking up a highway toward the border with Guatemala early Thursday, a day before a migrant caravan was scheduled to depart the city of San Pedro Sula. The group set out on Wednesday but paused at night before reaching some 75 police officers, dressed in riot gear, who waited along the highway on the outskirts of San Pedro Sula. One officer said the intention was

to stop the migrants from violating a pandemic-related curfew, check their documents and make sure they weren't traveling with children that were not their own. The migrants stopped about 2 kilometers short of the waiting police and bedded down for the night under and around a highway overpass. They resumed their walk after the curfew expired at 5 a.m. But the migrants faced the additional challenge of governments that agreed earlier this week to enforce immigration laws at their

borders. For weeks, a call for a new caravan departing Jan. 15 has circulated on social networks. In previous caravans, smaller groups have often left earlier than the main caravan. More migrants were expected to converge on San Pedro Sula on Thursday. Ariel Villega, 35, from the town of Ocotepeque, was walking with his wife and 10-year-old son. He said they planned to get to the Corinto border crossing and wait there for the rest of the caravan to arrive. □



Carrying a Honduran flag, migrants hoping to reach the distant U.S. border walk along a highway on the outskirts of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, shortly after setting off, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021.

Associated Press

LOCAL



Collaboration of the organizations leads to success during this pandemic Aruba Tourism Authority pays a visit to the Covid test center at the airport



ORANJESTAD — The Aruba Tourism Authority paid a visit to the airport in order to see and experience the whole procedure of the work being done by the Department of Public Health and the Hospital of Aruba, six months after the reopening of our borders. They were interested to see what has changed since then and also to get a feedback of the team. As you already know, all our

visitors, residents and non-residents, are required to fill in the ED card online prior to arrival. Non-residents are also required to buy the visitors insurance and must present their negative result of the Covid-19 test 72 hours before their traveling time. Visitors also have the option of doing the test upon arrival at the airport. There is a procedure the visitor has to go thru to be able to do this and it is

of utmost importance to make this process as pleasant and comfortable as possible upon their arrival.

Guidance at arrival

As soon as the airplane lands a team is standing by to welcome and guide the visitor. The team at the immigration area also conducts a general checkup and afterward the visitor can pick up their luggage. Afterward they will be guided to a special section where all their personal data will be verified. If they have their negative result with them, they can continue the line down to customs. Those who have to be tested are taken by the concerned personal of the Health department to take the test and afterward they will be guided to the arrival area where they will have to get to their destination

and go into quarantine awaiting their test result. The procedure takes about 15 minutes, but off course depending on the day and current situation at the airport.

Airport Process

This process at the airport together with all other procedures at the airport and all other departments such as customs and immigration are of utmost importance in order to insure everyone's wellbeing and safety. Different organizations have been working together since the reopening of the borders to help manage the Covid-19 situation by implementing different rules and protocols.

A.T.A's visit at the airport

The visit of the Aruba Tourism Authority was to have a view on the daily work being executed by the

Health Department on how the protocols are followed and what changes had been done after learning from this daily practice. A.T.A. was very satisfied on how the process is being handled and how everyone around is giving their utmost to ensure a successful reopening. Besides this, A.T.A received many compliments of our visitors stating their satisfaction on how everything is being greatly managed and how it's contributing to the actual development and progress of our tourism.

Aruba Tourism Authority would like to thank the entire team of the Department of Public Health working tirelessly at the airport and behind curtains that made the testing facility a complete success. Also a big thank you to Hyatt which send 3 personal to assist the team mid 2020. □

Aqua fitness class at the beach



EAGLE BEACH — This Saturday 17th of January from 5:30pm till 6:30pm Transition 2 Health invites you for a refreshing aqua fitness class which is recently introduced. The class is open for everybody but especially for people with joint problems (arthritis/arthrosis). Under the guidance of our professional instructor you get a nice work-out while you are enjoying our beautiful ocean and beach. For more information: Facebook Transition 2 Health. Location: Costa Linda Beach Resort Aruba. □



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PALM BEACH — Doctor Lili Beke from the Walk-In Clinic has a solid reputation, built on more than 35 years of experience as a medical doctor. Both tourists and locals feel great with her for these simple reasons: communicative, skilled, empathetic and trustworthy. She has all the qualities of a great doctor. When you feel sick during vacation, you want it out of your system as soon as possible. Don't look any further; help is just around the corner. Unique is the fact that you can walk into this clinic without an appointment.



Aruba Walk-in Clinic: Meet Dr. Lili Beke: a skilled person and humane doctor at heart

During the interview with Aruba Today the doctor keeps on getting calls from patients and every single call is answered with the all the patience in the world. The calm of Dr. Beke alone will ease you and with her experience, she makes sure that the bad luck on vacation is turned into a bad memory in the blink of an eye. Both locals and tourists are fans of the humane way Dr. Beke goes about her job.

What makes a doctor a good doctor?

A good doctor needs first to develop qualities of patience, patience and more patience to maintain the ability to care despite her patient's conditions. She needs to take time to explain and educate before medication and take time to think about the proper decision, this might not always be necessarily what is written in the textbooks. Taking time to explain and understand, choosing the language to fit each and every patient, medical school does not teach this, yet this is what defines Dr. Beke.

Covid times

Dr. Beke: "My priority during the Covid-19 period is attending as much patients as I can and that so far went very well. We have been busier as normal, but we managed. Now that the tourists are back again we shift from locals only to a mix of tourists and locals who walk in my practice." The government imposed protocol for covid-19 which is strictly followed and after each patient the room is thoroughly cleaned." Her practice is, literally, a stone-throw's distance from the high-rise hotels offering tourists quick and efficient service. "I noticed that many look for that personal touch and they do not like the assistance on distance by sending pics on a cell phone. I see my patients and this is important as I need to feel them."

Top 5 vacation illnesses

The most common reasons why patients walk into her clinic sound very familiar. Dr. Beke: "When on vacation you are ex-

cited so you mix meals, eat without control and combine this with more alcohol than usual resulting in an upset stomach. Digestion issues occur and when on a diet you can count on it that you will get sick." Throwing up, diarrhea, dehydration will be a bummer on your vacation. "Second occasion why people step in here is medication. They feel sick because they forgot to take their medicines with them or simply think they don't need it on holiday. But of course the body does not work differently only because you are in another place." This happens especially with patients of higher age and many times with blood pressure medication and psychological medicines, the doctor explains. □



Palm Beach Aruba Walk-in Clinic

Unit 8 at "The Cove", Palm Beach

Unit 9 at "The Cove", Palm Beach

Phone: +297 588 0539

Email: lgbeke.md@gmail.com

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Sat 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

(Friday afternoon 2pm– 4.30 pm)

Saturday, Sunday & Holidays 2 pm – 4 pm



Aruba's natural product: phosphate

ORANJESTAD — In the 19th century another natural product, besides gold, was found to be fit for exploitation. On Seroe Colorado, at the utmost south-easterly tip of the island, guano was found. This limestone, containing phosphoric acid, originates from bird droppings, in this case sea gulls. There was a broad world market for phosphate that was used as a fertilizer.

The discovery of guano is being credited to J. H. Waters Gravenhorst in 1874, but it seems that in 1859 already an American, S. R. Kimball, who was digging guano on the Aves islands, had applied for a permit for exploitation. If it actually has come to that, remains unknown.

In 1871, guano had also been discovered on Klein Curaçao by the Englishman John Godden. His discovery caused quite a hype on de Antillian islands, a kind of 'guano mania'. On Curaçao too, guano was found and exploited by Godden. The phosphate was very conspicuous by its color: yellow to red-brown or the color of liver, sometimes green or purple. That's how Seroe Colorado (the Colored Hill) got its name.

After the discovery of guano on Aruba by Gravenhorst, exploitation was started by the Aruba Phosphaat Maatschappij (APM), founded in December of 1879. The center of exportation was San Nicolas, which only consisted



of a few fishermen's huts before. The activities surrounding the exploitation and exportation of phosphate led to more and more huts being built there. It already started to look quite like a little village, where sailors from the ships that came for the phosphate came looking for distraction ashore. Local labor was initially only found with difficulty: that was because of the rival branch of industry, the exploitation of gold. That's why forty men were attracted from Bonaire and about twenty bricklayers and carpenters from Curaçao. Even a group of Italians was attracted to the island to manage the company; four of them never left the island: Antonio and Victorio Petrocci, Eugenio Falconi and Cajetano Jacopucci. They settled at Tanki Leendert.

The exploitation of phos-

phate led to the development of the settlement of Sint Nicolaas. First a wooden pier was built in the harbor and the phosphate was taken there by donkey. In 1881, new material arrived from England and New York. The installations that were built then were ultramodern for that time. In the Sint Nicolaasbay, an iron landing was built and that was the most modern harbor facility in the whole Caribbean at that time. For the transport of the phosphate to the harbor, a six kilometer long narrow gauge railway was built and the phosphate was taken to the loading berth in trains of about twenty tip carts and a steam locomotive. There it was loaded into sail ships that took it to countries like England, France, Germany and the United States to be processed to super phosphate that was used as fer-

tilizer. The phosphate company had its own tugboat (the 'S.S. Phosphate') and its own pilot to get the ships safely in and out of the Sint Nicolaasbay.

The time that was needed to load a ship was being reduced from 15 to 5 days. Three- to five hundred tons of phosphate per day could be handled by the pier. In 1882, about 250 men worked in the phosphate industry and the salaries were not bad. People came from all over the island to work in the phosphate mines; those who lived in the surroundings of Noord, had to get on their way by foot or on a donkey by Sunday afternoon, stayed overnight in Savaneta to start working on Monday. The workers stayed near the phosphate mines all week and slept in barracks. On Saturdays, they worked half day, after which they set out to return home on foot or on a donkey.....

Business went well and soon a profit was made which allowed paying off the loans that were made for the investments. A dividend could be paid out as well.

Initially, phosphate was extracted on Seroe Colorado and Seroe Culebra. When the supply at the surface of the hills was exhausted after about fifteen years, they went on to look for phosphate deeper in the ground. On a depth of 15 to 18 meters, phosphate

layers, six feet thick on average, were discovered at Banki Jerome, a bit more to the north. Mines were made to bring up the material. Those provided enough phosphate for the next 15 years. Holes were drilled by hand into the phosphate and then it was extracted with explosives. The exploitation of the phosphate caused the revenues of the island to rise considerably and that made it possible to support the other islands of the colony Curaçao (the Netherlands Antilles did not yet exist) as well. In the years of exploitation (that went on till 1914), 530.060 tons were exported with a total market value of almost 17 million guilders. Aruba could generate about 4 million guilders from exportation taxes.

But in the course of the years, phosphate exploitation became less profitable: as the phosphate had to be extracted from deeper underground, the quality became poorer. Furthermore, there was strong competition from good quality phosphate from Canada. Good and relatively cheap phosphate came out of Florida as well and as a result, the global prices went down. The APM found out that the expenses to exploit phosphate were too high to be able to still be competitive. Even though the tax rates had been reduced by the government, the profits continued to go down and finally the expenses could not be covered anymore. When World War I broke out in 1914, the exploitation of phosphate became very difficult. It was impossible to get dynamite and the means of exportation became worse as a result of the war in Europe. The Aruba Phosphaat Maatschappij closed down in August of 1914 and a year later, the company was dissolved by its shareholders. Workers left again and went looking for work in the surrounding countries like Venezuela and Colombia. Source: www.historia-diaruba.aw. □



Powell signals Fed will keep aiding economy with bond buying

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell sought Thursday to tamp down any concerns that the Fed might soon withdraw some of its support for the U.S. economy and stressed that any such pullback would be signaled far in advance.

During an online discussion hosted by Princeton University, from which Powell earned his undergraduate degree, the Fed chair said the recovery of the economy from the pandemic recession “is far from our goals.” The Fed had said after its last policy meeting last month that it would continue to buy \$120 billion in bonds each month until the economy made “substantial further progress” toward the Fed’s goals of maximum employment and stable 2% inflation.

“When that happens — and we can see that clearly — we’ll let the world



Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell testifies before a House Financial Services Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020.

Associated Press

know,” Powell said. “We will communicate very clearly to the public and we’ll do so well in advance before actively considering any tapering of asset purchases.” The bond purchases are intended to hold down longer-term interest rates to encourage consumers and businesses to borrow and spend. Lower rates on 10-year Treasuries, for example, reduce borrowing costs for

home and car buyers. At the same time, the central bank is keeping its benchmark short-term rate at a record low near zero to help support the economy. Powell’s remarks Thursday follow recent speculation in financial markets that the Fed might start reducing its bond purchases as early as this year, sooner than was previously expected. Investors have been selling Trea-

suries, increasing the yield on the 10-year Treasury note in the past week to about 1.1%, up from 0.9%. The speculation was fueled by comments from several regional Fed bank presidents, including Raphael Bostic of the Atlanta Fed and Robert Kaplan of Dallas. Bostic said last week that he was “hopeful that in fairly short order we can start to recalibrate” the bond purchases. Bostic is a voting member of the Fed’s policymaking committee this year. Members of the Federal Reserve’s Board of Governors, who carry particular weight on rate decisions, have stressed that any tapering of bond purchases won’t occur for months at least. One of them, Richard Clarida, said last Friday that he thought the purchases would likely continue at least into next year. And Lael Brainard, another governor, said Wednesday that the current level of bond buying

“will remain appropriate for quite some time.”

Some regional Fed bank presidents have signaled that any reduction in bond purchases is probably a long way off. Eric Rosengren, president of the Boston Fed, said in an interview with The Associated Press that “we are still very far from full employment.... Right now, we’re still in a recessionary economy, and we need to get out of that.”

Fed officials want to avoid a repeat of what became known as the “taper tantrum,” one of the Fed’s worst communications blunders. It occurred in 2013 under Chairman Ben Bernanke, who suggested that the Fed might soon start reducing the bond purchases it was engaging in at that time in the wake of the Great Recession. Bernanke’s remarks caught investors by surprise and triggered a spike in interest rates. □

Connecticut probing Amazon’s e-book deals with publishers

By **DAVE COLLINS**

Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) —

Connecticut authorities are investigating whether Amazon’s e-book deals with certain publishers are anticompetitive and violate antitrust laws, state Attorney General William Tong said Thursday.

Tong released only a few details of the probe. He said the state attorney general’s office has previously taken action against Apple and e-book publishers to protect competition in the marketplace.

“Our office continues to aggressively monitor this market to protect fair competition for consumers, authors, and other e-book retailers,” Tong said in a statement.

The investigation is part of the widening scrutiny by state and federal government agencies of possible anticompetitive practices by giant tech companies. Google and Facebook

are facing similar probes by federal and local officials into whether their business practices are illegally squashing competition and harming consumers.

Amazon has become the dominant force in print book sales and e-book sales in the U.S. The company accounts for over half of all print book sales and more than 80% of e-book sales, according to research cited in an October report by the antitrust committee of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee.

Tong’s office issued a subpoena to Amazon in 2019 requesting documents about the company’s dealings with five book publishers: HarperCollins Publishers, Hachette Book Group, Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster and Macmillan. A copy of the subpoena was obtained by the nonprofit investigative Tech Transpar-



In this Aug. 20, 2020 file photo, Connecticut Attorney General William Tong speaks to the media during a watch party for the Democratic National Convention, at Dunkin’ Donuts Park, in Hartford, Conn.

Associated Press

ency Project and shared with The Wall Street Journal, which reported on the investigation Wednesday. Simon & Schuster declined to comment. Messages seeking comment were left with the other four

publishers Thursday. In a previous antitrust investigation of electronic books, Apple was found to have conspired with publishers to raise e-book prices in an effort to challenge Amazon’s dominance of

the market. Apple fought the findings all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which rejected the appeal in 2016 and let stand a lower court ruling that found Apple violated antitrust laws in 2010. □

Hot again: 2020 sets yet another global temperature record

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**
AP Science Writer

Earth's rising fever hit or neared record hot temperature levels in 2020, global weather groups reported Thursday.

While NASA and a couple of other measurement groups said 2020 passed or essentially tied 2016 as the hottest year on record, more agencies, including the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, said last year came in a close second or third. The differences in rankings mostly turned on how scientists accounted for data gaps in the Arctic, which is warming faster than the rest of the globe.

"It's like the film 'Groundhog Day.' Another year, same story — record global warmth," said Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann, who wasn't part of the measurement teams. "As we continue to generate carbon pollution, we expect the planet to warm up. And that's precisely what we're seeing."

Scientists said all you had to do was look outside: "We saw the heat waves. We saw the fires. We saw the (melting) Arctic," said NASA top climate scientist Gavin Schmidt. "We're expecting it to get hotter and that's exactly what happened."



In this Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020, file photo, smoke from California wildfires up to 200 miles away obscures the view of traffic traveling on Interstate 80, looking west in Sparks, Nev.

Associated Press

NOAA said 2020 averaged 58.77 degrees (14.88 degrees Celsius), a few hundredths of a degree behind 2016.

NASA saw 2020 as warmer than 2016 but so close they are essentially tied. The European Copernicus group also called it an essential tie for hottest year, with 2016 warmer by an insignificant fraction. Japan's weather agency put 2020 as warmer than 2016, but a separate calculation by Japanese scientists put 2020 as a close third behind 2016 and 2019. The World Meteorological Organization, the British weather agen-

cy and Berkeley Earth's monitoring team had 2016 ahead.

First or second rankings really don't matter, "but the key thing to take away is that the long-term trends in temperature are very very clearly up and up and up," said Schmidt, who heads NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies that tracks temperatures. "We're in a position where we're pushing the climate system out of the bounds that it's been in for tens of thousands of years, if not millions of years."

All the monitoring agencies agree the six warmest years

on record have been the six years since 2015. The 10 warmest have all occurred since 2005, and scientists say that warming's driven by the burning of coal, oil and natural gas.

Temperatures the last six or seven years "really hint at an acceleration in the rise of global temperatures," said Russ Vose, analysis branch chief at NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information. While temperature increases have clearly accelerated since the 1980s, it's too early to discern a second and more recent acceleration, Schmidt said.

Last year's exceptional heat "is yet another stark reminder of the relentless pace of climate change, which is destroying lives and livelihoods across our planet," United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement. "Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century."

The United States, which had its fifth warmest year, smashed the record for the number of weather disasters that cost at least \$1 billion with 22 of them in 2020, including hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes and a Midwest derecho. The old record of 16 was set in 2011 and 2017. This was the sixth consecutive year with 10 or more billion-dollar climate disasters, with figures adjusted for inflation.

Earth has now warmed 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times and is adding another 0.2 degrees Celsius (0.36 Fahrenheit) a decade.

That means the planet is nearing an international warming threshold set in Paris in 2015, Vose and Schmidt said. Nations of the world set a goal of preventing at least 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming, with a tougher secondary goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). □

Blue Origin launches capsule to space with astronaut perks

By **MARCIA DUNN**
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)

— Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin company launched a new capsule into space Thurs-



In this image from video made available by Blue Origin, the company's New Shepard rocket lands after a test flight in West Texas on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021.

Associated Press

day to test all the astronaut perks before people strap in. Thursday's flight with a dummy named Mannequin Skywalker lasted 10 minutes and reached 66 miles (106 kilometers) above West Texas. Both the New Shepard rocket and the capsule landed successfully.

It was the 14th flight to the fringes of space for a New Shepard rocket. The first was in 2015.

"The success of this flight puts us one really big step closer to flying astronauts," launch commentator

Ariane Cornell said from company headquarters in Kent, Washington. "There's going to be a lot of fun ahead in 2021."

Blue Origin plans to launch paying passengers — tourists, scientists and professional astronauts — on brief hops over West Texas' remote desert. It's also working on a bigger rocket, New Glenn, that would blast off from Cape Canaveral as well as a lunar lander for astronauts under NASA's Artemis moon program.

The capsule soaring Thurs-

day featured the latest crew upgrades: microphones and push-to-talk buttons for the six seats, wall panels to muffle engine noise, a safety-alert system, and temperature and humidity controls to keep passengers comfortable and the big windows free of fog.

The launch and landing team was scaled back because of the pandemic. New Shepard is named for the first American in space, Alan Shepard. New Glenn honors John Glenn, the first American in orbit. □

Twitter CEO defends Trump ban, warns of dangerous precedent

By DAVID HAMILTON
AP Technology Editor
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey defended his company's ban of President Donald

Trump in a philosophical Twitter thread that is his first public statement on the subject.

When Trump incited his followers to storm the U.S. Capitol last week, then continued to tweet potentially ominous messages, Dorsey said the resulting risk to public safety created an "extraordinary and untenable circumstance" for the company. Having already briefly suspended Trump's account the day of the Capitol riot, Twitter on Friday banned Trump entirely, then smacked down the president's attempts to tweet using other accounts.

"I do not celebrate or feel

pride in our having to ban @realDonaldTrump from Twitter," Dorsey wrote. But he added: "I believe this was the right decision for Twitter."

Dorsey acknowledged that shows of strength like the Trump ban could set dangerous precedents, even calling them a sign of "failure." Although not in so many words, Dorsey suggested that Twitter needs to find ways to avoid having to make such decisions in the first place. □



In this Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020, file photo, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey appears on a screen as he speaks remotely during a hearing before the Senate Commerce Committee on Capitol Hill, in Washington.

Associated Press

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By Dave Green

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Study: Pandemic eats into LGBTQ representation on network TV

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — LGBTQ

and gender inclusiveness on television has retreated slightly this season due to delays and shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new study out Thursday by the advocacy group GLAAD. The percentage of regularly seen LGBTQ characters on streaming as well as prime-time broadcast TV and cable during the 2020-21 season fell. Prime-time broadcast fell to 9.1% after reaching an all-time high of 10.2% last season. That represents the first decrease since GLAAD's 2013-14 report. "We're hoping that is just a blip and not the beginning of a trend," GLAAD's President & CEO Sarah Kate Ellis said in an interview, adding that the decrease overall was largely due to fewer shows being made.

GLAAD's report, "Where We Are on TV," found that 70 out of 773 series regular characters on broadcast scripted prime-time TV were LGBTQ. Last year, those numbers were 90 out of a total of 879 characters.



This combination of photos shows show writers and creators, from left, Greg Berlanti, Shonda Rhimes, Ryan Murphy and Lena Waithe who were named in a study about LGBTQ and gender inclusiveness on television.

Recurring LGBT characters were also down. There were also declines in LGBTQ representation on streaming services and prime-time scripted cable shows, triggered in part by production shutdowns of such series as "The L Word," "Euphoria" and "Killing Eve." GLAAD is asking the industry to reach 20% representation of LGBTQ regularly seen characters on all three platforms by 2025, and to ensure that half of LGBTQ characters on every TV platform are people of color within the next two years. The group found good news on the second request in the latest study — over half of LGBTQ characters on cable

television were people of color, meeting GLAAD's challenge. And for a second year, GLAAD counted more LGBTQ regular and recurring women on prime-time broadcasts than LGBTQ men. The advocacy group noted that nearly half of all LGBTQ representation in prime-time scripted cable is seen on just three networks — FX, Freeform and Showtime. It urged other networks to follow their lead.

The report also found that nearly one in every five LGBTQ characters is connected to just four show writers and creators — Shonda Rhimes, Greg Berlanti, Lena Waithe and Ryan Murphy.

Ellis noted that data from the Nielsen company shows that pandemic-affected Americans — age 18 and over — are averaging 37 hours of TV a week — almost a second full-time job. That means the stakes are even higher for GLAAD's goals of reaching representation, even as the fragility of positive movement is clear.

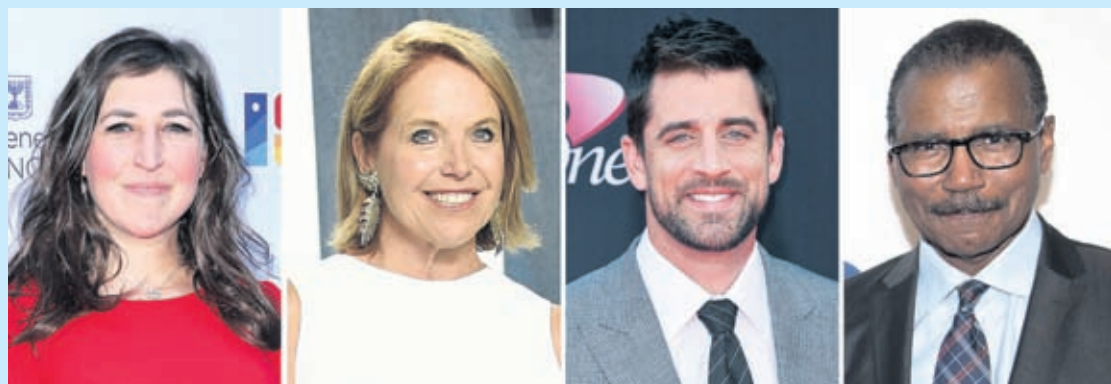
"The content is more important than ever and it's having a bigger impact than ever. So for us we're thrilled that the drop wasn't as big as it could have been. But, if all things are equal, then even if the quantity of programs goes down, the representation shouldn't," Ellis

said. An estimated 4.5% of adults in the United States, approximately 11.3 million people, identify as LGBTQ, according to the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. GLAAD and The Harris Poll have found that 20% of Americans ages 18-34 identify as LGBTQ.

While streaming and cable shows have found homes for LGBTQ characters, GLAAD focuses on gains made on broadcast channels because, unlike those TV alternatives, channels like ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox are in everybody's household. "We still do focus on broadcast because that's where a majority of Americans are still taking in and absorbing content. That's still where the majority of Americans might meet their first gay person or transgender person or bisexual person for the first time," Ellis said. GLAAD also found that the number of characters living with HIV plunged from nine to three — all three on FX's "Pose," set in the late 1980s. The organization is calling on the industry to introduce no less than three new regular or recurring LGBTQ characters living with HIV each year on cable or broadcast primetime.

Associated Press

Katie Couric, Mayim Bialik to be 'Jeopardy!' guest hosts



In this combination photo, Mayim Bialik, from left, attends the Israeli Consulate Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of Israel on June 10, 2018, in Los Angeles, Katie Couric arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party on Feb. 9, 2020, in Beverly Hills, Calif., Aaron Rodgers arrives at the ESPYS on July 12, 2017, in Los Angeles and Bill Whitaker attends the CBS Upfront on May 15, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Katie Couric, Mayim Bialik, Aaron Rodgers and journalist Bill Whitaker are among the future guest hosts who will fill in for the late Alex Trebek on "Jeopardy!"

The show announced Wednesday that Couric, the journalist and former "Today" show host, will become the first woman ever to host the show.

Trebek, the face of the show for 36 years, died from pancreatic cancer Nov. 8, and the final shows he recorded aired last week. The show has opted to use a series of interim guest hosts rather than immediately find permanent replacements.

Ken Jennings, considered the show's greatest champion, is currently serving as

the first guest host.

Once his run is done, executive producer Mike Richards will fill in for two weeks while the newly announced guests prepare for their stints.

Rodgers, the superstar quarterback currently leading the Green Bay Packers through the NFL playoffs, is a former "Celebrity Jeopardy!" cham-

pion, and Bialik, former star of CBS' "The Big Bang Theory" and current star of Fox's "Call Me Kat," is a neuroscientist, making them fitting choices to serve up clues for contestants for the brainy quiz show.

Rodgers, the Pro Bowler and two-time NFL MVP, had already leaked the news of his hosting earlier this week.

"I apologize to 'Jeopardy!' if they wanted to announce it, I just got so excited," Rodgers said Tuesday. "The show has been so special to me over the years."

Whitaker, a "60 Minutes" correspondent, will also be a guest host.

The show will make a donation to the guest hosts' charity of choice that matches the total dollar amount won by contestants during their run.

SOLUTION SUDOKU

Difficulty Level: ★★ ★★

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3	6	1	2	8	5	4	7	9
9	5	7	4	3	6	8	2	1
4	2	8	9	7	1	3	6	5
1	9	4	3	2	7	6	5	8
8	7	6	1	5	4	2	9	3
5	3	2	8	6	9	7	4	1
7	4	3	5	1	8	9	2	6
6	8	5	7	9	2	1	3	4
2	1	9	6	4	3	5	8	7

Puzzle on Page 13

Analysis: Nets have pieces, now they need to fit together

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Having a Big Three is great. That is, if those players want it to be great.

And that's the challenge in Brooklyn now, after agreeing to the trade that landed three-time reigning scoring champion James Harden from Houston: Getting Harden, Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, all individually great, to want to be great together.

A lot of futures and a lot of legacies depend on what happens.

Durant found a way to make it happen in Golden State when he played alongside Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson on the way to a pair of NBA titles. It worked there because Curry and Thompson, more than happily, checked their egos at the door and made it seem like a seamless incorporation.

Harden never made the NBA Finals in Houston with big-time backcourt partners like Chris Paul and Russell Westbrook, plus didn't even give it a chance this season alongside John Wall. He wanted a trade, stars who want trades almost always get their way, and after what amounted to a resignation speech on Tuesday night after a loss to the reigning champion Los Angeles Lakers it was clear that he was never wearing a Rockets jersey again.

Irving won a title in Cleveland with LeBron James, but that relationship never was what it could have been — and nobody knows where



James Harden of the Houston Rockets reacts to a basket during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Jan. 10, 2021, in Houston, Texas.

Associated Press

Irving's mind is at after now a week and counting of personal leave away from the Nets. He reportedly left for family birthday parties and a Zoom call to help organize a candidate's campaign for district attorney in Manhattan. Oh, and that Zoom happened on a night that the Nets were playing.

At this point, it's unclear when — or if — Irving will return to the Nets.

But give the Nets credit. They went all-in with this trade. They dealt away a rising standout in Caris LeVert and bet most of their foreseeable draft future — three first-round picks, at minimum — on the hope that Harden is the last piece needed on the way to a championship. He's now

reunited with not just Durant, another former teammate in Oklahoma City when they were starting out and still found their way to the 2012 NBA Finals, but also former Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni as well.

D'Antoni is a Brooklyn assistant under first-year coach Steve Nash and isn't shy about grabbing a clipboard and offering opinions in timeouts.

And doing it during a pandemic with limited practices and seemingly inevitable breaks, makes it a stiff challenge. James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh were the trio that led Miami past those Thunder in the 2012 finals, getting a ring in their second year together (and one the next year, too). They lost the finals to Dal-

las in 2011 and needed to win two elimination games against Boston just to get out of the Eastern Conference on the way to that 2012 title. While it took time for Miami to jell, it worked because Wade, the best player the Heat had ever known, stepped aside so James could be the first option. It worked because Bosh accepted playing third fiddle behind a pair of fellow future Hall of Famers. If any of those three balked at their respective roles, the Heat wouldn't have those two titles. The only way Brooklyn wins a title or two with this group is if Durant, Harden and Irving accept their roles now. On paper, the infusion of talent could be astoundingly good.

— There are nine men in

the history of the NBA with three or more scoring titles — and two of them now play for the Nets, with Durant's four and Harden's three.

— There are nine active players who have played more than 500 games and averaged at least 22.5 points; Durant, Harden and Irving are three of them.

But, and it's a big but: All three are used to having the ball in their hands at an absurd rate; unless the NBA changes the rules and allows for multiple basketballs at once, that'll obviously have to change. And unless the NBA allows six defenders, guarding them will be a problem as well.

"You can't double-team all three of them," Orlando coach Steve Clifford said.

Durant and Harden were great together, but that was nearly a decade ago and Harden wasn't even a starter for those Thunder teams. Durant is a much bigger star now than he was then, and Harden's rise has been meteoric since those days.

Harden should be happy; he got what he wanted. Durant should be happy; the Nets are better now than they were when he got there, without question. But now they must wait and see if Irving wants to be part of this.

If he comes back and handles it the way someone like Bosh did in Miami, the Nets could be championship-caliber, quite possibly the favorites in a loaded Eastern Conference. □

Peterhansel leads Dakar Rally heading into last stage

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Stephane Peterhansel will take a 15-minute lead into the last stage of the Dakar Rally after overcoming two punctures on Thursday to stay in front. Peterhansel's record 14th win and record eighth in a car are pending on the last stage back to Jeddah, where the rally in Saudi Arabia started 11 days ago.

The Frenchman led the 11th stage from AlUla south to Yanbu beside the Red Sea through the middle section, and led title rival Nasser Al-Attiyah by up to 3 1/2 minutes.

But Al-Attiyah, a three-time champion, overcame his own punctures to win his sixth stage. However, the Qatari gained only 1 minute, 56

seconds on second-placed Peterhansel.

"We lost just a few minutes, it's nothing," Peterhansel said. "There's only one day to go ... it's time to cross fingers and hope that we will be in first place at the end."

Defending champion Carlos Sainz was third on the stage and remained third overall, more than an hour behind.

Kevin Benavides of Argentina looks set to win his first Dakar title after holding off Honda teammate Ricky Brabec, the defending motorbike champion from the U.S.

Brabec, who started the stage only 51 seconds and second behind Benavides overall, ended it seven minutes behind and third.

They rode the last 200 kilometers together and opened the way after teammate and Spanish rider Joan Barreda ran out of petrol.

Barreda, who started the stage fourth overall, missed a refueling station and lasted only another 50 kilometers, until around 267 kilometers in. He called for medical assistance and was airlifted out.

"Tomorrow we will push like every day, no other strategy than that," Benavides said. "There are no team orders."

Benavides' closest rival became stage winner Sam Sunderland of Britain, the 2017 champion. He clawed back six minutes to lie only four minutes behind going into the last stage. □

Allen, Jackson set for playoff showdown as Bills host Ravens

By **JOHN WAWROW**

AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP)

— Ravens coach John Harbaugh was immediately impressed by Buffalo quarterback Josh Allen's competitive fire following their first face-to-face encounter in an NFL setting.

It happened in the 2018 season opener, when the then-raw rookie Bills quarterback was shoved into the Ravens' sideline. Allen hopped up and exchanged words with players and Harbaugh before officials stepped in to separate everyone.

"He came up jawing and talking and shoving and pushing," Harbaugh recalled as fifth-seeded Baltimore (12-5) prepares to face the AFC East champion Bills (14-3) in a divisional playoff Saturday night. "Rookie quarterback. Man, I love this guy."

Allen was only in the game for mop-up duty after Nate Peterman was benched upon throwing his second interception, which led to the Ravens building a 40-0 lead in an eventual 47-3 victory. What struck Harbaugh is how Allen refused to back down, a quality he also sees in Baltimore's Lamar Jackson, who also made his NFL debut that day as Joe Flacco's back-up.

"They've come up on the quote-unquote other side of the tracks from a football



Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen (17) talks with Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson (8) following a 24-17 Ravens win in an NFL football game in Orchard Park, N.Y., in this Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019, file photo.

perspective where they came up the hard way, doubted often, and had to overcome that," Harbaugh said. "I always like the underdog."

Allen, whom the Bills traded up five spots to select No. 7 in the 2018 draft, had accuracy issues and was dismissed for playing at lowly regarded Wyoming. Jackson, selected 32nd in 2018, was questioned as to whether the dynamic mobility he showed at Louisville would translate to the NFL.

Three seasons later, both are coming off their first career playoff victories and have their teams one win short of appearing in the

AFC championship game. Jackson made his splash last season when he earned NFL MVP honors after leading the NFL with 36 touchdown passes, 43 combined TDs and became the league's first player to top 3,000 yards passing and 1,000 rushing.

And yet, Jackson failed to silence his critics because he was 0-2 in the playoffs before a 20-13 win at Tennessee last weekend. It was a game in which the Ravens overcame a 10-0 deficit — their largest in a playoff victory — with Jackson sparking the comeback with an electrifying 48-yard touchdown run.

One win isn't enough.

"We know how it feels to be hyped up and we know how it feels to be at your lowest point," Jackson said. "We're focused on Buffalo and we're not trying to let the outside noise or anything like that distract us." Allen blossomed into a star this season by setting numerous franchise passing and scoring records, while finishing fourth in the NFL in completing 69.2% of his passes — a 10.45% jump over last year.

An NFL MVP candidate, Allen is the key reason the Bills matched a franchise record in winning 13 regular-season games and clinched their first division title in 25 years.

Associated Press

Allen benefitted from spending three years being groomed by offensive coordinator Brian Daboll, and the influx of talent brought in by GM Brandon Beane. The most notable addition this offseason was acquiring Stefon Diggs in a trade with Minnesota.

Much like Jackson, Allen prefers putting the past behind him and focusing on the next challenge.

And yet, he remembered his encounter with Harbaugh, and noted how the two laughed about it the following April when they bumped into each other at The Masters.

"My first game, yeah. I've changed a lot since then. My mannerisms and my temper's a little different than it was back in the day," Allen said. "I don't forget those days. They've helped me get to where I am."

PLAYOFF MODE

Baltimore has been playing with a win-or-done urgency since early December, following a 1-4 skid that dropped it to 6-5.

The Ravens were depleted by a COVID-19 outbreak in a 19-14 loss at Pittsburgh before reeling off six consecutive wins.

"We've had our backs against the wall since the Pittsburgh game," Harbaugh said. "I really think our guys have handled everything exceptionally well." □



Seattle Seahawks defensive end Carlos Dunlap (43) leaps to try and deflect a pass from Los Angeles Rams quarterback Jared Goff during the second half of an NFL wild-card playoff football game, Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021, in Seattle.

Associated Press

By **GREG BEACHAM**

AP Sports Writer

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif.

(AP) — Quarterback Jared Goff will start the Los Angeles Rams' playoff game

Jared Goff to start for Rams in Green Bay; Wolford inactive

at Green Bay on Saturday, and John Wolford will be inactive. Coach Sean McVay announced his decision Thursday ahead of the final workout for the Rams (11-6) before they travel to face the top-seeded Packers (13-3) at Lambeau Field. Wolford started the Rams' last two games, but the second-year pro was injured early in Los Angeles' 30-20 win at Seattle last Saturday. Wolford left the stadium in an ambulance with a neck stinger after a hit from the Seahawks' Ja-

mal Adams, and he hasn't practiced this week.

Goff has been the Rams' starter for the past 4 1/2 years, but he sat out their regular-season finale after breaking his right thumb, missing a game due to injury for the first time in his career.

Goff then was the Rams' backup in their first playoff game, but he relieved Wolford in Seattle and led Los Angeles to victory with 155 yards passing.

"He's been able to get a lot of good individual

work," McVay said of Goff's health. "He's making good progress. The further you get away from that, the more normal — I know he's been pain-free, but I think the more functionality and feeling like yourself."

Wolford will still travel to Green Bay with the Rams, but he won't play. Veteran Blake Bortles, who returned to the Rams in Week 17 after Goff's injury, will be Goff's backup against the Packers, and rookie third quarterback Bryce Perkins also might be active. □